

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, and the rejection of claims 1-25 are respectfully requested. Applicants have attempted to address every objection and ground for rejection in the Office Action dated March 28, 2005 (Paper No. 032005) and believe the application is now in condition for allowance. The claims have been amended to more clearly describe the present invention.

Applicants have amended the specification to correct grammatical errors. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added. Further, Applicants have amended FIG. 10 to include reference number 89. A corrected drawing sheet is submitted herewith.

Claims 1-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,739,242 to McCarty et al. McCarty et al. disclose a multi-station modular charging system having a supporting means 14 with electrical contacts 42, 43 and a means for locking the modular units together 44, 46. In McCarty et al., the charging stands are electrically connected in series, in a base and multiple satellite configuration. The base is electrically connected to a power source, and the satellite units are connected to the base in series (See, the Abstract and FIGs. 1A, 2).

In contrast, amended claims 9 and 22, directed to a set of charging stands, recite that “each of the stands is configured to be powered directly.” That is, in the present interlocking charging stand, each stand is capable of being used independently of any other stand (i.e. a “stand alone” charging stand) because each stand is powered directly. Each stand has a power source receiving means 86, 88, 89 (FIGs. 8-10) which receives a

power source, such as a power cord. Further, each stand of the present interlocking charging stand is not dependent on any other stand for power. In fact, each stand is not electrically connected to another stand. Thus, if a user wishes to physically detach one stand from another stand, the first stand can provide recharging power to the appliance directly from the power cord (without receiving power indirectly from another stand). For this reason, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 9 and 22, and the claims that depend therefrom, is overcome.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 14 directed to a stand, the claims have been amended to recite “wherein said means for interlock is disposed on two sides of the stand, and said means for interlock is the same on both said sides.”

In *McCarty et al.*, the means for interlock on one side of the module is a hook 46, 48, and the means for interlock on a second side of the module is a receiving detent 32, 30 (FIG. 2). Thus, the means for interlock are different on the first and second sides. This configuration allows the modules to be connected in a predetermined direction to facilitate the series wiring from one module to the next module.

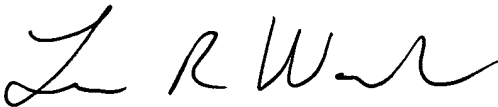
In contrast, in the present interlocking charging stand, the means for interlock are the same on two sides of the charging stand. In FIGs. 4 and 6, the means for interlock is two sets of holes 74 on both sides of the stand 16. In FIG. 7, the means for interlock is two sets of tabs 75 on both sides of the stand 18. The interlock means on the stands 16, 18 are the same on both sides because it doesn't matter which sides of the stands 16, 18 are connected together since the connection of the stands is only a physical connection, not an electrical connection. Thus, the stand 18 with the tabs 75 can

physically interlock with the stand 16 with the holes 74 on either side of the stand 16. Further, the stand 16 with the holes 74 can physically interlock with the stand 18 with the tabs 75 on either side of the stand 18. Since McCarty et al. do not disclose the feature of means for interlock disposed on two sides of the stand, where the means for interlock is the same on both sides, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 1 and 14, and the claims that depend therefrom, has been overcome.

Applicants submit that in view of the above-identified amendments and remarks, the claims in their present form are patentably distinct over the art of record. Allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner discover there are remaining issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Reference number 89 has been added to FIG. 10. The corrected, replacement drawing is enclosed.